

**UNITED STATES PATENT APPLICATION FOR:**

**GAS DELIVERY APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR  
ATOMIC LAYER DEPOSITION**

**INVENTORS:**

**LING CHEN  
VINCENT KU  
DIEN-YEH WU  
HUA CHUNG  
ALAN OUYE  
NORMAN NAKASHIMA**

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B. Todd Patterson  
Signature

B. TODD PATTERSON  
Name

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## **GAS DELIVERY APPARATUS AND METHOD FOR ATOMIC LAYER DEPOSITION**

### **CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATIONS**

[0001] This application claims benefit of United States provisional Patent Application Serial Number \_\_\_\_\_, entitled "METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR ALD DEPOSITION" (Attorney Docket No. AMAT/5192L) filed October 26, 2001, which is herein incorporated by reference.

### **BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION**

#### **Field of the Invention**

[0002] Embodiments of the present invention generally relate to an apparatus and method for atomic layer deposition. More particularly, embodiments of the present invention relate to an improved gas delivery apparatus and method for atomic layer deposition.

#### **Description of the Related Art**

[0003] Reliably producing sub-micron and smaller features is one of the key technologies for the next generation of very large scale integration (VLSI) and ultra large scale integration (ULSI) of semiconductor devices. However, as the fringes of circuit technology are pressed, the shrinking dimensions of interconnects in VLSI and ULSI technology have placed additional demands on the processing capabilities. The multilevel interconnects that lie at the heart of this technology require precise processing of high aspect ratio features, such as vias and other interconnects. Reliable formation of these interconnects is very important to VLSI and ULSI success and to the continued effort to increase circuit density and quality of individual substrates.

[0004] As circuit densities increase, the widths of vias, contacts, and other features, as well as the dielectric materials between them, decrease to sub-micron dimensions (e.g., less than 0.20 micrometers or less), whereas the thickness of the dielectric layers remains substantially constant, with the result that the aspect ratios for the features, *i.e.*, their height divided by width, increase. Many traditional deposition processes have

difficulty filling sub-micron structures where the aspect ratio exceeds 4:1, and particularly where the aspect ratio exceeds 10:1. Therefore, there is a great amount of ongoing effort being directed at the formation of substantially void-free and seam-free sub-micron features having high aspect ratios.

[0005] Atomic layer deposition is one deposition technique being explored for the deposition of material layers over features having high aspect ratios. One example of atomic layer deposition comprises the sequential introduction of pulses of gases. For instance, one cycle for the sequential introduction of pulses of gases may comprise a pulse of a first reactant gas, followed by a pulse of a purge gas and/or a pump evacuation, followed by a pulse of a second reactant gas, and followed by a pulse of a purge gas and/or a pump evacuation. The term "gas" as used herein is defined to include a single gas or a plurality gases. Sequential introduction of separate pulses of the first reactant and the second reactant may result in the alternating self-limiting absorption of monolayers of the reactants on the surface of the substrate and, thus, forms a monolayer of material for each cycle. The cycle may be repeated to a desired thickness of the deposited material. A pulse of a purge gas and/or a pump evacuation between the pulses of the first reactant gas and the pulses of the second reactant gas serves to reduce the likelihood of gas phase reactions of the reactants due to excess amounts of the reactants remaining in the chamber.

[0006] However, there is a need for new apparatuses to perform gas delivery and to perform deposition of films by atomic layer deposition.

## **SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION**

[0007] Embodiments of the present invention relate to an improved gas delivery apparatus adapted for atomic layer deposition or rapid chemical vapor deposition. One embodiment of the gas delivery assembly comprises a covering member having an expanding channel at a central portion of the covering member and having a bottom surface extending from the expanding channel to a peripheral portion of the covering member. One or more gas conduits are coupled to the expanding channel in which the one or more gas conduits are positioned at an angle from a center of the expanding channel.

[0008] Another embodiment of the gas delivery assembly comprises a first valve and

a second valve. The first valve includes a first delivery line and a first purge line. The first delivery line comprises a first reactant gas inlet, a first reactant gas outlet, and a first valve seat assembly. The first purge line comprises a first purge gas inlet and a first purge gas outlet. The first purge gas outlet of the first purge line is in communication with the first delivery line downstream of the first valve seat assembly. The second valve includes a second delivery line and a second purge line. The second delivery line comprises a second reactant gas inlet, a second reactant gas outlet, and a second valve seat assembly. The second purge line comprises a second purge gas inlet and a second purge gas outlet. The second purge gas outlet of the second purge line is in communication with the second delivery line downstream of the second valve seat assembly.

[0009] One embodiment of a chamber comprises a substrate support having a substrate receiving surface. The chamber further includes a chamber lid having a passageway at a central portion of the chamber lid and a tapered bottom surface extending from the passageway to a peripheral portion of the chamber lid. The bottom surface of the chamber lid is shaped and sized to substantially cover the substrate receiving surface. One or more valves are coupled to the passageway, and one or more gas sources are coupled to each valve. In one aspect, the bottom surface of the chamber lid may be tapered. In another aspect, a reaction zone defined between the chamber lid and the substrate receiving surface may comprise a small volume. In still another aspect, the passageway may comprise a tapered expanding channel extending from the central portion of the chamber lid.

[0010] Another embodiment of the chamber comprises a substrate support having a substrate receiving surface. The chamber further comprises a chamber lid having an expanding channel extending from a central portion of the chamber lid and having a tapered bottom surface extending from the expanding channel to a peripheral portion of the chamber lid. One or more gas conduits are disposed around an upper portion of the expanding channel in which the one or more gas conduits are disposed at an angle from a center of the expanding channel. A choke is disposed on the chamber lid adjacent a perimeter of the tapered bottom surface.

[0011] One embodiment of a method of depositing a material layer over a substrate structure comprises delivering a first reactant gas and a first purge gas through a first

gas conduit in which the first reactant gas is provided in pulses and the first purge gas is provided in a continuous flow. The method further comprises delivering a second reactant gas and a second purge through a second gas conduit in which the second reactant gas is provided in pulses and the second purge gas is provided in a continuous flow.

[0012] One embodiment of a method of delivering gases to a substrate in a substrate processing chamber comprises providing one or more gases into the substrate processing chamber, reducing a velocity of the gases through non-adiabatic expansion, providing the gases to a central portion of the substrate, and directing the gases radially across the substrate from the central portion of the substrate to a peripheral portion of the substrate.

[0013] Another embodiment of a method of delivering gases to a substrate in a substrate processing chamber comprises providing one or more gases to a central portion of the substrate and directing the gases radially at a substantially uniform velocity across the substrate from the central portion of the substrate to a peripheral portion of the substrate.

#### **BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS**

[0014] So that the manner in which the above recited features of the present invention are attained and can be understood in detail, a more particular description of the invention, briefly summarized above, may be had by reference to the embodiments thereof which are illustrated in the appended drawings.

[0015] It is to be noted, however, that the appended drawings illustrate only typical embodiments of this invention and are therefore not to be considered limiting of its scope, for the invention may admit to other equally effective embodiments.

[0016] Figure 1 is a schematic cross-sectional view of one embodiment of a chamber including a gas delivery apparatus adapted for atomic layer deposition.

[0017] Figure 2 is a top cross-sectional view of one embodiment of the expanding channel of the chamber lid of Figure 1.

[0018] Figure 3 is a cross-sectional view of the expanding channel of the chamber lid of Figure 1.

[0019] Figure 4 is a schematic cross-sectional view illustrating the flow of a gas at

two different positions between the surface of a substrate and the bottom surface of the chamber lid of Figure 1.

[0020] Figure 5 is a top cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the expanding channel of the chamber lid which is adapted to receive a single gas flow.

[0021] Figure 6 is a top cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the expanding channel of the chamber lid which is adapted to receive three gas flows.

[0022] Figure 7 is a schematic cross-sectional view of another embodiment of a chamber including a gas delivery apparatus adapted for atomic layer deposition.

[0023] Figure 8 shows another embodiment of a chamber including a gas delivery apparatus adapted for atomic layer deposition.

[0024] Figure 9A is a schematic cross-sectional view of one embodiment of the choke of the chamber lid.

[0025] Figure 9B is a cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the choke of the chamber lid.

#### **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENT**

[0026] Figure 1 is a schematic cross-sectional view of one embodiment of a chamber 200 including a gas delivery apparatus 230 adapted for atomic layer deposition or rapid chemical vapor deposition. The term "atomic layer deposition" and "rapid chemical vapor deposition" as used herein refer to the sequential introduction of reactants to deposit a thin layer over a substrate structure. The sequential introduction of reactants may be repeated to deposit a plurality of thin layers to form a conformal layer to a desired thickness. The chamber 200 may also be adapted for other deposition techniques.

[0027] The chamber 200 comprises a chamber body 202 having sidewalls 204 and a bottom 206. A slit valve 208 in the chamber 200 provides access for a robot (not shown) to deliver and retrieve a substrate 210, such as a 200 mm or 300 mm semiconductor wafer or a glass substrate, from the chamber 200.

[0028] A substrate support 212 supports the substrate 210 on a substrate receiving surface 211 in the chamber 200. The substrate support 212 is mounted to a lift motor 214 to raise and lower the substrate support 212 and a substrate 210 disposed thereon. A lift plate 216 connected to a lift motor 218 is mounted in the chamber 200 and raises

and lowers pins 220 movably disposed through the substrate support 212. The pins 220 raise and lower the substrate 210 over the surface of the substrate support 212. The substrate support 212 may include a vacuum chuck, an electrostatic chuck, or a clamp ring for securing the substrate 212 to the substrate support 212 during processing.

[0029] The substrate support 212 may be heated to heat a substrate 210 disposed thereon. For example, the substrate support 212 may be heated using an embedded heating element, such as a resistive heater, or may be heated using radiant heat, such as heating lamps disposed above the substrate support 212. A purge ring 222 may be disposed on the substrate support 212 to define a purge channel 224 which provides a purge gas to a peripheral portion of the substrate 210 to prevent deposition thereon.

[0030] A gas delivery apparatus 230 is disposed at an upper portion of the chamber body 202 to provide a gas, such as a process gas and/or a purge gas, to the chamber 200. A vacuum system 278 is in communication with a pumping channel 279 to evacuate any desired gases from the chamber 200 and to help maintain a desired pressure or a desired pressure range inside a pumping zone 266 of the chamber 200.

[0031] In one embodiment, the gas delivery apparatus 230 comprises a chamber lid 232. The chamber lid 232 includes an expanding channel 234 extending from a central portion of the chamber lid 232 and a bottom surface 260 extending from the expanding channel 234 to a peripheral portion of the chamber lid 232. The bottom surface 260 is sized and shaped to substantially cover a substrate 210 disposed on the substrate support 212. The expanding channel 234 has gas inlets 236A, 236B to provide gas flows from two similar valves 242A, 242B. The gas flows from the valves 242A, 242B may be provided together and/or separately.

[0032] In one configuration, valve 242A and valve 242B are coupled to separate reactant gas sources but are preferably coupled to the same purge gas source. For example, valve 242A is coupled to reactant gas source 238 and valve 242B is coupled to reactant gas source 239, and both valves 242A, 242B are coupled to purge gas source 240. Each valve 242A, 242B includes a delivery line 243A, 243B having a valve seat assembly 244A, 244B and includes a purge line 245A, 245B having a valve seat assembly 246A, 246B. The delivery line 243A, 243B is in communication with the reactant gas source 238, 239 and is in communication with the gas inlet 236A, 236B of

the expanding channel 234. The valve seat assembly 244A, 244B of the delivery line 243A, 243B controls the flow of the reactant gas from the reactant gas source 238, 239 to the expanding channel 234. The purge line 245A, 245B is in communication with the purge gas source 240 and intersects the delivery line 242A, 242B downstream of the valve seat assembly 244A, 244B of the delivery line 242A, 242B. The valve seat assembly 246A, 246B of the purge line 245A, 245B controls the flow of the purge gas from the purge gas source 240 to the delivery line 243A, 243B. If a carrier gas is used to deliver reactant gases from the reactant gas source 238, 239, preferably the same gas is used as a carrier gas and a purge gas (i.e. an argon gas used as a carrier gas and a purge gas).

[0033] Each valve seat assembly 244A, 244B, 246A, 246B may comprise a diaphragm and a valve seat. The diaphragm may be biased open or closed and may be actuated closed or open respectively. The diaphragms may be pneumatically actuated or may be electrically actuated. Examples of pneumatically actuated valves include pneumatically actuated valves available from Fujiken and Veriflow. Examples of electrically actuated valves include electrically actuated valves available from Fujiken. Programmable logic controllers 248A, 248B may be coupled to the valves 242A, 242B to control actuation of the diaphragms of the valve seat assemblies 244A, 244B, 246A, 246B of the valves 242A, 242B. Pneumatically actuated valves may provide pulses of gases in time periods as low as about 0.020 seconds. Electrically actuated valves may provide pulses of gases in time periods as low as about 0.005 seconds. An electrically actuated valve typically requires the use of a driver coupled between the valve and the programmable logic controller.

[0034] Each valve 242A, 242B may be a zero dead volume valve to enable flushing of a reactant gas from the delivery line 243A, 243B when the valve seat assembly 244A, 244B of the valve is closed. For example, the purge line 245A, 245B may be positioned adjacent the valve seat assembly 244A, 244B of the delivery line 243A, 243B. When the valve seat assembly 244A, 244B is closed, the purge line 245A, 245B may provide a purge gas to flush the delivery line 243A, 243B. In the embodiment shown, the purge line 245A, 245B is positioned slightly spaced from the valve seat assembly 244A, 244B of the delivery line 243A, 243B so that a purge gas is not directly delivered into the valve seat assembly 244A, 244B when open. A zero dead volume valve as used herein is



defined as a valve which has negligible dead volume (i.e. not necessary zero dead volume.)

[0035] Each valve 242A, 242B may be adapted to provide a combined gas flow and/or separate gas flows of the reactant gas 238, 239 and the purge gas 240. In reference to valve 242A, one example of a combined gas flow of the reactant gas 238 and the purge gas 240 provided by valve 242A comprises a continuous flow of a purge gas from the purge gas source 240 through purge line 245A and pulses of a reactant gas from the reactant gas source 238 through delivery line 243A. The continuous flow of the purge gas may be provided by leaving diaphragm of the valve seat assembly 246A of the purge line 245A open. The pulses of the reactant gas from the reactant gas source 238 may be provided by opening and closing the diaphragm of the valve seat 244A of the delivery line 243A. In reference to valve 242A, one example of separate gas flows of the reactant gas 238 and the purge gas 240 provided by valve 242A comprises pulses of a purge gas from the purge gas source 240 through purge line 245A and pulses of a reactant gas from the reactant gas source 238 through delivery line 243A. The pulses of the purge gas may be provided by opening and closing the diaphragm of the valve seat assembly 246A of the purge line 245A open. The pulses of the reactant gas from the reactant gas source 238 may be provided by opening and closing the diaphragm valve seat 244A of the delivery line 243A.

[0036] The delivery lines 243A, 243B of the valves 242A, 242B may be coupled to the gas inlets 236A, 236B through gas conduits 250A, 250B. The gas conduits 250A, 250B may be integrated or may be separate from the valves 242A, 242B. In one aspect, the valves 242A, 242B are coupled in close proximity to the expanding channel 234 to reduce any unnecessary volume of the delivery line 243A, 243B and the gas conduits 250A, 250B between the valves 242A, 242B and the gas inlets 236A, 236B.

[0037] In reference to Figure 3, each gas conduit 250A, 250B and gas inlet 236A, 236B may be positioned in any relationship to a longitudinal axis 290 of the expanding channel. Each gas conduit 250A, 250B and gas inlet 236A, 236B are preferably positioned normal (in which  $+\beta$ ,  $-\beta =$  to  $90^\circ$ ) to the longitudinal axis 290 or positioned at an angle  $+\beta$  or an angle  $-\beta$  (in which  $0^\circ < +\beta < 90^\circ$  or  $0^\circ < -\beta < 90^\circ$ ) from the centerline 302A, 302B of the gas conduit 250A, 250B to the longitudinal axis 290. Therefore, the gas conduit 250A, 250B may be positioned horizontally normal to the longitudinal axis

290 as shown in Figure 3, may be angled downwardly at an angle  $+\beta$ , or may be angled upwardly at an angle  $-\beta$  to provide a gas flow toward the walls of the expanding channel 234 rather than directly downward towards the substrate 210 which helps reduce the likelihood of blowing off reactants absorbed on the surface of the substrate 210. In addition, the diameter of the gas conduits 250A, 250B may be increasing from the delivery lines 243A, 243B of the valves 242A, 242B to the gas inlet 236A, 236B to help reduce the velocity of the gas flow prior to its entry into the expanding channel 234. For example, the gas conduits 250A, 250B may comprise an inner diameter which is gradually increasing or may comprise a plurality of connected conduits having increasing inner diameters.

**[0038]** Referring to Figure 1, the expanding channel 234 comprises a channel which has an inner diameter which increases from an upper portion 237 to a lower portion 235 of the expanding channel 234 adjacent the bottom surface 260 of the chamber lid 232. In one specific embodiment, the inner diameter of the expanding channel 234 for a chamber adapted to process 200 mm diameter substrates is between about 0.2 inches about 1.0 inches, more preferably between about 0.3 and about 0.9 inches, and more preferably between 0.3 inches and about 0.5 at the upper portion 237 of the expanding channel 234 and between about 0.5 inches and about 3.0 inches, preferably between about 0.75 inches and about 2.5 inches, and more preferably between about 1.1 inches and about 2.0 inches at the lower portion 235 of the expanding channel 234. In another specific embodiment, the inner diameter of the expanding channel 234 for a chamber adapted to process 300 mm diameter substrates is between about 0.2 inches about 1.0 inches, more preferably between about 0.3 and about 0.9 inches, and more preferably between 0.3 inches and about 0.5 at the upper portion 237 of the expanding channel 234 and between about 0.5 inches and about 3.0 inches, preferably between about 0.75 inches and about 2.5 inches, and more preferably between about 1.2 inches and about 2.2 inches at the lower portion 235 of the expanding channel 234 for a 300 mm substrate. In general, the above dimension apply to an expanding channel adapted to provide a total gas flow of between about 500 sccm and about 3,000 sccm. In other specific embodiments, the dimension may be altered to accommodate a certain gas flow therethrough. In general, a larger gas flow will require a larger diameter expanding channel. In one embodiment, the expanding channel 234 may be shaped as a

truncated cone (including shapes resembling a truncated cone). Whether a gas is provided toward the walls of the expanding channel 234 or directly downward towards the substrate, the velocity of the gas flow decreases as the gas flow travels through the expanding channel 234 due to the expansion of the gas. The reduction of the velocity of the gas flow helps reduce the likelihood the gas flow will blow off reactants absorbed on the surface of the substrate 210.

[0039] Not wishing to be bound by theory, it is believed that the diameter of the expanding channel 234, which is gradually increasing from the upper portion 237 to the lower portion 235 of the expanding channel, allows less of an adiabatic expansion of a gas through the expanding channel 234 which helps to control the temperature of the gas. For instance, a sudden adiabatic expansion of a gas delivered through the gas inlet 236A, 236B into the expanding channel 234 may result in a drop in the temperature of the gas which may cause condensation of the gas and formation of particles. On the other hand, a gradually expanding channel 234 according to embodiments of the present invention is believed to provide less of an adiabatic expansion of a gas. Therefore, more heat may be transferred to or from the gas, and, thus, the temperature of the gas may be more easily controlled by controlling the surrounding temperature of the gas (i.e., controlling the temperature of the chamber lid 232). The gradually expanding channel may comprise one or more tapered inner surfaces, such as a tapered straight surface, a concave surface, a convex surface, or combinations thereof or may comprise sections of one or more tapered inner surfaces (i.e. a portion tapered and a portion non-tapered).

[0040] In one embodiment, the gas inlets 236A, 236B are located adjacent the upper portion 237 of the expanding channel 234. In other embodiments, one or more gas inlets may be located along the length of the expanding channel 234 between the upper portion 237 and the lower portion 235.

[0041] Figure 2 is a top cross-sectional view of one embodiment of the expanding section 234 of the chamber lid 232 of Figure 1. Each gas conduit 250A, 250B may be positioned at an angle  $\alpha$  from the center line 302 of the gas conduit 250A, 250B and from a radius line 304 from the center of the expanding channel 234. Entry of a gas through the gas conduit 250A, 250B preferably positioned at an angle  $\alpha$  (i.e., when  $\alpha > 0^\circ$ ) causes the gas to flow in a circular direction as shown by arrow 310A (or 310B).

Providing gas at an angle  $\alpha$  as opposed to directly straight-on to the walls of the expanding channel (i.e. when  $\alpha=0^\circ$ ) helps to provide a more laminar flow through the expanding channel 234 rather than a turbulent flow. It is believed that a laminar flow through the expanding channel 234 results in an improved purging of the inner surface of the expanding channel 234 and other surfaces of the chamber lid 232. In comparison, a turbulent flow may not uniformly flow across the inner surface of the expanding channel 234 and other surfaces and may contain dead spots or stagnant spots in which there is no gas flow. In one aspect, the gas conduits 250A, 250B and the corresponding gas inlets 236A, 236B are spaced out from each other and direct a flow in the same circular direction (i.e., clockwise or counter-clockwise).

[0042] Not wishing to be bound by theory, Figure 3 is a cross-sectional view of the expanding channel 234 of a chamber lid 232 showing simplified representations of two gas flows therethrough. Although the exact flow pattern through the expanding channel 234 is not known, it is believed that the circular flow 310 (Figure 3) may travel as a "vortex," "helix," or "spiral" flow 402A, 402B through the expanding channel 234 as shown by arrows 402A, 402B. As shown in Figure 3, the circular flow may be provided in a "processing region" as opposed to in a compartment separated from the substrate 210. In one aspect, the vortex flow may help to establish a more efficient purge of the expanding channel 234 due to the sweeping action of the vortex flow pattern across the inner surface of the expanding channel 234.

[0043] In one embodiment, the distance 410 between the gas inlets 236A, 236B and the substrate 210 is made far enough that the "vortex" flow 402 dissipates to a downwardly flow as shown by arrows 404 as a spiral flow across the surface of the substrate 210 may not be desirable. It is believed that the "vortex" flow 402 and the downwardly flow 404 proceeds in a laminar manner efficiently purging the chamber lid 232 and the substrate 210. In one specific embodiment the distance 410 between the upper portion 237 of the expanding channel 234 and the substrate 210 is about 1.0 inches or more, more preferably about 2.0 inches or more. In one specific embodiment, the upper limit of the distance 410 is dictated by practical limitations. For example, if the distance 410 is very long, then the residence time of a gas traveling through the expanding channel 234 would be long, then the time for a gas to deposit onto the substrate would be long, and then throughput would be low. In addition, if distance 410

is very long, manufacturing of the expanding channel 234 would be difficult. In general, the upper limit of distance 410 may be 3 inches or more for a chamber adapted to process 200 mm diameter substrates or 5 inches or more for a chamber adapted to process 300 mm diameter substrates.

[0044] Referring to Figure 1, at least a portion of the bottom surface 260 of the chamber lid 232 may be tapered from the expanding channel 234 to a peripheral portion of the chamber lid 232 to help provide an improved velocity profile of a gas flow from the expanding channel 234 across the surface of the substrate 210 (i.e., from the center of the substrate to the edge of the substrate). The bottom surface 260 may comprise one or more tapered surfaces, such as a straight surface, a concave surface, a convex surface, or combinations thereof. In one embodiment, the bottom surface 260 is tapered in the shape of a funnel.

[0045] Not wishing to be bound by theory, Figure 4 is schematic view illustrating the flow of a gas at two different positions 502, 504 between the bottom surface 260 of the chamber lid 232 and the surface of a substrate 210. The velocity of the gas at a certain position is theoretically determined by the equation below:

$$(1) \quad Q/A = V$$

In which, "Q" is the flow of the gas, "A" is the area of the flow section, and "V" is the velocity of the gas. The velocity of the gas is inversely proportional to the area "A" of the flow section ( $H \times 2 \pi R$ ), in which "H" is the height of the flow section and " $2 \pi R$ " is the circumference of the flow section. In other words, the velocity of a gas is inversely proportional to the height "H" of the flow section and the radius "R" of the flow section.

[0046] Comparing the velocity of the flow section at position 502 and position 504, assuming that the flow "Q" of the gas at all positions between the bottom surface 260 of the chamber lid 232 and the surface of the substrate 210 is equal, the velocity of the gas may be theoretically made equal by having the area "A" of the flow sections equal. For the area of flow sections at position 502 and position 504 to be equal, the height  $H_1$  at position 502 must be greater than the height  $H_2$ .

[0047] In one aspect, the bottom surface 260 is downwardly sloping to help reduce the variation in the velocity of the gases as it travels between the bottom surface 260 of the chamber lid 232 and the substrate 210 to help provide uniform exposure of the surface of the substrate 210 to a reactant gas. In one embodiment, the ratio of the

maximum area of the flow section over the minimum area of the flow section between a downwardly sloping bottom surface 260 of the chamber lid 232 and the surface of the substrate 210 is preferably less than about 2, more preferably less than about 1.5, more preferably less than about 1.3, and most preferably about 1.

[0048] Not wishing to be bound by theory, it is believed that a gas flow traveling at a more uniform velocity across the surface of the substrate 210 helps provide a more uniform deposition of the gas on the substrate 210. It is believed that the velocity of the gas is directly proportional to the concentration of the gas which is in turn directly proportional to the deposition rate of the gas on the substrate surface. Thus, a higher velocity of a gas at a first area of the surface of the substrate versus a second area of the surface of the substrate is believed to provide a higher deposition of the gas on the first area. It is believed that a chamber lid having a downwardly sloping bottom surface 260 provides for more uniform deposition of the gas across the surface of the substrate because the downwardly sloping bottom surface provides a more uniform velocity and, thus, a more uniform concentration of the gas across the surface of the substrate.

[0049] Referring to Figure 1, the chamber lid 232 may have a choke 262 at a peripheral portion of the chamber lid 232 adjacent the periphery of the substrate 210. The choke 262, when the chamber lid 232 is assembled to form a processing zone around the substrate 210, comprises any member restricting the flow of gas therethrough at an area adjacent the periphery of the substrate 210. Figure 9A is a schematic cross-sectional view of one embodiment of the choke 262. In this embodiment, the choke 262 comprises a circumferential lateral portion 267. In one aspect, the purge ring 222 may be adapted to direct a purge gas toward the lateral portion 267 of the choke 262. Figure 9B is a schematic cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the choke 262. In this embodiment, the choke 262 comprises a circumferential downwardly extending protrusion 268. In one aspect, the purge ring 222 may be adapted to direct a purge gas toward the circumferential downwardly extending protrusion 268. In one specific embodiment, the thickness of the downwardly extending protrusion 268 is between about 0.01 inches and about 1.0 inch, more preferably 0.01 inches and 0.5 inches.

[0050] In one specific embodiment, the spacing between the choke 262 and the substrate support 212 is between about 0.04 inches and about 2.0 inches, and

preferably between 0.04 inches and about 0.2 inches. The spacing may vary depending on the gases being delivered and the process conditions during deposition. The choke 262 helps provide a more uniform pressure distribution within the volume or a reaction zone 264 defined between the chamber lid 232 and the substrate 210 by isolating the reaction zone 264 from the non-uniform pressure distribution of the pumping zone 266 (Figure 1).

[0051] Referring to Figure 1, in one aspect, since the reaction zone 264 is isolated from the pumping zone 266, a reactant gas or purge gas needs only adequately fill the reaction zone 264 to ensure sufficient exposure of the substrate 210 to the reactant gas or purge gas. In conventional chemical vapor deposition, prior art chambers are required to provide a combined flow of reactants simultaneously and uniformly to the entire surface of the substrate in order to ensure that the co-reaction of the reactants occur uniformly across the surface of the substrate. In atomic layer deposition, the present chamber 200 sequentially introduces reactants to the substrate surface to provide absorption of alternating thin layers of the reactants onto the surface of the substrate. As a consequence, atomic layer deposition does not require a flow of a reactant which reaches the surface of the substrate simultaneously. Instead, a flow of a reactant needs to be provided in an amount which is sufficient to absorb a thin layer of the reactant on the surface of the substrate.

[0052] Since the reaction zone 264 may comprise a smaller volume when compared to the inner volume of a conventional CVD chamber, a smaller amount of gas is required to fill the reaction zone 264 for a particular process in an atomic layer deposition sequence. For example, in one embodiment, the volume of the reaction zone 264 is about  $1000\text{ cm}^3$  or less, preferably  $500\text{ cm}^3$  or less, and more preferably  $200\text{ cm}^3$  or less for a chamber adapted to process 200 mm diameter substrates. In one embodiment, the volume of the reaction zone 264 is about  $3,000\text{ cm}^3$  or less, preferably  $1,500\text{ cm}^3$  or less, and more preferably  $600\text{ cm}^3$  or less for a chamber adapted to process 300 mm diameter substrates. In one embodiment, the substrate support 212 may be raised or lowered to adjust the volume of the reaction zone 264 for deposition. Because of the smaller volume of the reaction zone 264, less gas, whether a deposition gas or a purge gas, is necessary to be flowed into the chamber 200. Therefore, the throughput of the chamber 200 is greater and the waste may be minimized due to the

smaller amount of gas used reducing the cost of operation.

[0053] The chamber lid 232 has been shown in Figures 1-4 as comprising a cap portion 272 and a chamber plate portion 270 in which the cap portion 272 and the chamber plate portion 270 form the expanding channel 234. An additional plate may be optionally disposed between the chamber lid portion 270 and the cap portion 272. In other embodiments, the expanding channel 234 may be made integrally from a single piece of material.

[0054] The chamber lid 232 may include cooling elements and/or heating elements depending on the particular gas being delivered therethrough. Controlling the temperature of the chamber lid 232 may be used to prevent gas decomposition, deposition, or condensation on the chamber lid 232. For example, water channels may be formed in the chamber lid 232 to cool the chamber lid 232. In another example, heating elements may be embedded or may surround components of the chamber lid 232 to heat the chamber lid 232. In one embodiment, components of the chamber lid 232 may be individually heated or cooled. For example, referring to Figure 1, the chamber lid 232 may comprise a chamber plate portion 270 and a cap portion 272 in which the chamber plate portion 270 and the cap portion 272 form the expanding channel 234. The cap may be maintained at one temperature range and the chamber lid may be maintained at another temperature range. For example, the cap 272 may be heated by being wrapped in heater tape or by using another heating device to prevent condensation of reactant gases and the chamber plate portion 270 may be maintained at ambient temperature. In another example, the cap 272 may be heated and the chamber plate portion may be cooled with water channels formed therethrough to prevent thermal decomposition of reactant gases on the chamber plate portion 270.

[0055] The chamber lid 232 may be made of stainless steel, aluminum, nickel-plated aluminum, nickel, or other suitable materials compatible with the processing to be performed. In one embodiment, the cap portion 272 comprises stainless steel and the chamber plate portion 270 comprises aluminum. In one embodiment, the additional plate comprises stainless steel. In one embodiment, the expanding channel 234 and the bottom surface 260 of the chamber lid 232 may comprise a mirror polished surface to help produce a laminar flow of a gas along the expanding channel 234 and the bottom surface 260 of the chamber lid 232. In another embodiment, the inner surface of



the gas conduits 250A, 250B may be electropolished to help produce a laminar flow of a gas therethrough.

[0056] Returning to Figure 1, a control unit 280, such as a programmed personal computer, work station computer, or the like, may be coupled to the chamber 200 to control processing conditions. For example, the control unit 280 may be configured to control flow of various process gases and purge gases from gas sources 238, 239, 240 through the valves 242A, 242B during different stages of a substrate process sequence. Illustratively, the control unit 280 comprises a central processing unit (CPU) 282, support circuitry 284, and memory 286 containing associated control software 283.

[0057] The control unit 280 may be one of any form of general purpose computer processor that can be used in an industrial setting for controlling various chambers and sub-processors. The CPU 282 may use any suitable memory 286, such as random access memory, read only memory, floppy disk drive, hard disk, or any other form of digital storage, local or remote. Various support circuits may be coupled to the CPU 282 for supporting the chamber 200. The control unit 280 may be coupled to another controller that is located adjacent individual chamber components, such as the programmable logic controllers 248A, 248B of the valves 242A, 242B. Bi-directional communications between the control unit 280 and various other components of the chamber 200 are handled through numerous signal cables collectively referred to as signal buses 288, some of which are illustrated in Figure 1. In addition to control of process gases and purge gases from gas sources 238, 239, 240 and from the programmable logic controllers 248A, 248B of the valves 242A, 242B, the control unit 280 may be configured to be responsible for automated control of other activities used in wafer processing---such as wafer transport, temperature control, chamber evacuation, among other activities, some of which are described elsewhere herein.

[0058] Referring to Figures 1-4, in operation, a substrate 210 is delivered to the chamber 200 through the opening 208 by a robot (not shown). The substrate 210 is positioned on the substrate support 212 through cooperation of the lift pins 220 and the robot. The substrate support 212 raises the substrate 210 into close opposition to the bottom surface 260 of the chamber lid 232. A first gas flow may be injected into the expanding channel 234 of the chamber 200 by valve 242A together or separately (i.e. pulses) with a second gas flow injected into the chamber 200 by valve 242B. The first

gas flow may comprise a continuous flow of a purge gas from purge gas source 240 and pulses of a reactant gas from reactant gas source 238 or may comprise pulses of a reactant gas from reactant gas source 238 and pulses of a purge gas from purge gas source 240. The second gas flow may comprises a continuous flow of a purge gas from purge gas source 240 and pulses of a reactant gas from reactant gas source 239 or may comprise pulses of a reactant gas from reactant gas source 239 and pulses of a purge gas from purge gas source 240. The gas flow travels through the expanding channel 234 as a vortex flow pattern 402 which provides a sweeping action across the inner surface of the expanding channel 234. The vortex flow pattern 402 dissipates to a downwardly flow 404 toward the surface of the substrate 210. The velocity of the gas flow reduces as it travels through the expanding channel 234. The gas flow then travels across the surface of the substrate 210 and across the bottom surface 260 of the chamber lid 232. The bottom surface 260 of the chamber lid 232, which is downwardly sloping, helps reduce the variation of the velocity of the gas flow across the surface of the substrate 210. The gas flow then travels by the choke 262 and into the pumping zone 266 of the chamber 200. Excess gas, by-products, etc. flow into the pumping channel 279 and are then exhausted from the chamber 200 by a vacuum system 278. In one aspect, the gas flow proceeds through the expanding channel 234 and between the surface of the substrate 210 and the bottom surface 260 of the chamber lid 232 in a laminar manner which aids in uniform exposure of a reactant gas to the surface of the substrate 210 and efficient purging of inner surfaces of the chamber lid 232.

[0059] Chamber 200 as illustrated in Figures 1-4 has been described herein as having a combination of features. In one aspect, chamber 200 provides a reaction zone comprising a small volume in compared to a conventional CVD chamber. The chamber 200 requires a smaller amount of a gas, such as a reactant gas or a purge gas, to fill the reaction zone for a particular process. In another aspect, chamber 200 provides a chamber lid having a downwardly sloping or funnel shaped bottom surface to reduce the variation in the velocity profile of a gas flow traveling between the bottom surface of the chamber lid and a substrate. In still another aspect, the chamber 200 provides an expanding channel to reduce the velocity of a gas flow introduced therethrough. In still another aspect, the chamber 200 provides gas conduits at an angle  $\alpha$  from the center of the expanding channel. The chamber 200 provides other features as described

elsewhere herein. Other embodiments of a chamber adapted for atomic layer deposition incorporate one or more of these features.

[0060] For example, Figure 7 shows another embodiment of a chamber 800 including a gas delivery apparatus 830 comprising a chamber lid 832 which provides a reaction 864 zone comprising a small volume and which provides an expanding channel. Some components of the chamber 800 are the same or similar to those described with reference to chamber 200 of Figure 1, described above. Accordingly, like numbers have been used where appropriate. The chamber lid 832 comprises a bottom surface 860 that is substantially flat. In one embodiment, the spacing between the choke 262 and the substrate support 210 is between about 0.04 inches and about 2.0 inches, more preferably between about 0.04 inches and about 0.2 inches.

[0061] In another example, Figure 8 shows another embodiment of a chamber 900 including a gas delivery apparatus 930 comprising a chamber lid 932 which provides a reaction zone 964 comprising a small volume and which provides a downwardly sloping or funnel shaped bottom surface 960. Some components of the chamber 900 are the same or similar to those described with reference to chamber 200 of Figure 1, described above. Accordingly, like numbers have been used where appropriate. Gas sources 937 are coupled to the passageway 933 through one or more valves 941. In one aspect, the passageway 933 comprising a long length to reduce the likelihood that a gas introduced through valve 941 will blow off reactants absorbed on the surface of the substrate 210.

[0062] The gas delivery apparatuses 230, 830, 930 of Figures 1-8 has been described above as comprising chamber lids 232, 832, 932 which act as the lid of the chamber body. Other embodiments of the chamber lids 232, 832, 932 comprises any covering member disposed over the substrate support 212 delineating a reaction zone 264, 864, 964 which lowers the volume in which a gas must flow during substrate processing. In other embodiments, instead or in conjunction with the substrate support 212, the chamber lid may be adapted to move up and down to adjust the volume of the reaction zone 264.

[0063] The gas delivery apparatus 230 of Figure 1 has been described as including two valves 242A, 242B coupled to a reactant gas source and a purge gas source. In other embodiments, the gas delivery apparatus 230 may comprise one or more valves

coupled to a single or a plurality of gas sources in a variety of configurations. Figures 1-3 show a chamber 200 adapted to provide two gas flows together or separately from two gas inlets 236A, 236B utilizing two valves 242A, 242B. Figure 5 is a top cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the expanding channel of the chamber lid which is adapted to receive a single gas flow through one gas inlet 636 from one gas conduit 650 coupled to a single or a plurality of valves. The gas conduit 650 may be positioned at an angle  $\alpha$  from the center line 602 of the gas conduit 650 and from a radius line 604 from the center of the expanding channel 634. The gas conduit 650 positioned at an angle  $\alpha$  (i.e., when  $\alpha > 0^\circ$ ) causes a gas to flow in a circular direction as shown by arrow 610. Figure 6 is a top cross-sectional view of another embodiment of the expanding channel of the chamber lid which is adapted to receive three gas flows together, partially together (i.e. two of three gas flows together), or separately through three gas inlets 736A, 736B, 736C from three gas conduits 750A, 750B, 750C in which each conduit is coupled to a single or a plurality of valves. The gas conduits 750A, 750B, 750C may be positioned at an angle  $\alpha$  from the center line 702 of the gas conduits 750A, 750B, 750C and from a radius line 704 from the center of the expanding channel 734. The gas conduits 750A, 750B, 750C positioned at an angle  $\alpha$  (i.e., when  $\alpha > 0^\circ$ ) causes a gas to flow in a circular direction as shown by arrow 710.

[0064] Embodiments of chambers 200, 800, 900 with gas delivery apparatuses 230, 830, 930 as described in Figures 1-8 may be used to advantage to implement atomic layer deposition processes of elements, which include but are not limited to, tantalum, titanium, tungsten, and copper, or to implement atomic layer deposition of compounds or alloys/combinations films, which include but are not limited to tantalum nitride, tantalum silicon nitride, titanium nitride, titanium silicon nitride, tungsten nitride, tungsten silicon nitride, and copper aluminum. Embodiments of chambers 200, 800, 900 with gas delivery apparatuses 230, 830, 930 as described in Figures 1-8 may also be used to advantage to implement chemical vapor deposition of various materials.

[0065] For clarity reasons, deposition of a layer by atomic layer deposition will be described in more detail in reference to the atomic layer deposition of a tantalum nitride layer utilizing chamber 200 as described in Figures 1-4. In one aspect, atomic layer deposition of a tantalum nitride barrier layer comprises sequentially providing pulses of a tantalum containing compound and pulses of a nitrogen containing compound to the

process chamber 200 in which each pulse is separated by a flow of a purge gas and/or chamber evacuation to remove any excess reactants to prevent gas phase reactions of the tantalum containing compound with the nitrogen containing compound and to remove any reaction by-products. Sequentially providing a tantalum containing compound and a nitrogen containing compound may result in the alternating absorption of monolayers of a tantalum containing compound and of monolayers of a nitrogen containing compound to form a monolayer of tantalum nitride on a substrate structure for each cycle of pulses. The term substrate structure is used to refer to the substrate as well as other material layers formed thereover, such as a dielectric layer.

[0066] It is believed that the absorption processes used to absorb the monolayer of the reactants, such as the tantalum containing compound and the nitrogen containing compound, are self-limiting in that only one monolayer may be absorbed onto the surface of the substrate structure during a given pulse because the surface of the substrate structure has a finite number of sites for absorbing the reactants. Once the finite number of sites are occupied by the reactants, such as the tantalum containing compound or the nitrogen containing compound, further absorption of the reactants will be blocked. The cycle may be repeated to a desired thickness of the tantalum nitride layer.

[0067] Pulses of a tantalum containing compound, such as pentadimethylamino-tantalum (PDMAT;  $\text{Ta}(\text{NMe}_2)_5$ ), may be introduced by gas source 238 through valve 242A. The tantalum containing compound may be provided with the aid of a carrier gas, which includes, but is not limited to, helium (He), argon (Ar), nitrogen ( $\text{N}_2$ ), hydrogen ( $\text{H}_2$ ), and combinations thereof. Pulses of a nitrogen containing compound, such as ammonia, may be introduced by gas source 239 through valve 242A. A carrier gas may also be used to help deliver the nitrogen containing compound. A purge gas, such as argon, may be introduced by gas source 240 through valve 242A and/or through valve 242B. In one aspect, the flow of purge gas may be continuously provided by gas sources 240 through valves 242A, 242B to act as a purge gas between the pulses of the tantalum containing compound and of the nitrogen containing compound and to act as a carrier gas during the pulses of the tantalum containing compound and the nitrogen containing compound. In one aspect, delivering a purge gas through two gas conduits 250A, 250B provides a more complete purge of the reaction zone 264 rather than a

purge gas provided through one gas conduit 250A, 250B. In one aspect, a reactant gas may be delivered through one gas conduit 250A, 250B since uniformity of flow of a reactant gas, such as a tantalum containing compound or a nitrogen containing compound, is not as critical as uniformity of the purge gas due to the self-limiting absorption process of the reactants on the surface of substrate structures. In other embodiments, a purge gas may be provided in pulses. In other embodiments, a purge gas may be provided in more or less than two gas flows. In other embodiments, a tantalum containing gas may be provided in more than a single gas flow (i.e. two or more gas flows). In other embodiments, a nitrogen containing may be provided in more than a single gas flow (i.e. two or more gas flows).

[0068] Other examples of tantalum containing compounds, include, but are not limited to, other organo-metallic precursors or derivatives thereof, such as pentaethylmethylamino-tantalum (PEMAT;  $\text{Ta}[\text{N}(\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{CH}_3)_2]_5$ ), pentadiethylamino-tantalum (PDEAT;  $\text{Ta}(\text{NEt}_2)_5$ ), and any and all derivatives of PEMAT, PDEAT, or PDMAT. Other tantalum containing compounds include without limitation TBTDET ( $\text{Ta}(\text{NEt}_2)_3\text{NC}_4\text{H}_9$  or  $\text{C}_{16}\text{H}_{39}\text{N}_4\text{Ta}$ ) and tantalum halides, for example  $\text{TaX}_5$  where X is fluorine (F), bromine (Br) or chlorine (Cl), and/or derivatives thereof. Other nitrogen containing compounds may be used which include, but are not limited to,  $\text{N}_x\text{H}_y$  with x and y being integers (e.g., hydrazine ( $\text{N}_2\text{H}_4$ )), dimethyl hydrazine ( $(\text{CH}_3)_2\text{N}_2\text{H}_2$ ), t-butylhydrazine ( $\text{C}_4\text{H}_9\text{N}_2\text{H}_3$ ), phenylhydrazine ( $\text{C}_6\text{H}_5\text{N}_2\text{H}_3$ ), other hydrazine derivatives, a nitrogen plasma source (e.g.,  $\text{N}_2$ ,  $\text{N}_2/\text{H}_2$ ,  $\text{NH}_3$ , or a  $\text{N}_2\text{H}_4$  plasma), 2,2'-azoisobutane ( $(\text{CH}_3)_6\text{C}_2\text{N}_2$ ), ethylazide ( $\text{C}_2\text{H}_5\text{N}_3$ ), and other suitable gases. Other examples of purge gases include, but are not limited to, helium (He), nitrogen ( $\text{N}_2$ ), hydrogen ( $\text{H}_2$ ), other gases, and combinations thereof.

[0069] The tantalum nitride layer formation is described as starting with the absorption of a monolayer of a tantalum containing compound on the substrate followed by a monolayer of a nitrogen containing compound. Alternatively, the tantalum nitride layer formation may start with the absorption of a monolayer of a nitrogen containing compound on the substrate followed by a monolayer of the tantalum containing compound. Furthermore, in other embodiments, a pump evacuation alone between pulses of reactant gases may be used to prevent mixing of the reactant gases.

[0070] The time duration for each pulse of the tantalum containing compound, the

time duration for each pulse of the nitrogen containing compound, and the duration of the purge gas between pulses of the reactants are variable and depend on the volume capacity of a deposition chamber employed as well as a vacuum system coupled thereto. For example, (1) a lower chamber pressure of a gas will require a longer pulse time; (2) a lower gas flow rate will require a longer time for chamber pressure to rise and stabilize requiring a longer pulse time; and (3) a large-volume chamber will take longer to fill, longer for chamber pressure to stabilize thus requiring a longer pulse time. Similarly, time between each pulse is also variable and depends on volume capacity of the process chamber as well as the vacuum system coupled thereto. In general, the time duration of a pulse of the tantalum containing compound or the nitrogen containing compound should be long enough for absorption of a monolayer of the compound. In one aspect, a pulse of a tantalum containing compound may still be in the chamber when a pulse of a nitrogen containing compound enters. In general, the duration of the purge gas and/or pump evacuation should be long enough to prevent the pulses of the tantalum containing compound and the nitrogen containing compound from mixing together in the reaction zone.

[0071] Generally, a pulse time of about 1.0 second or less for a tantalum containing compound and a pulse time of about 1.0 second or less for a nitrogen containing compound are typically sufficient to absorb alternating monolayers on a substrate structure. A time of about 1.0 second or less between pulses of the tantalum containing compound and the nitrogen containing compound is typically sufficient for the purge gas, whether a continuous purge gas or a pulse of a purge gas, to prevent the pulses of the tantalum containing compound and the nitrogen containing compound from mixing together in the reaction zone. . Of course, a longer pulse time of the reactants may be used to ensure absorption of the tantalum containing compound and the nitrogen containing compound and a longer time between pulses of the reactants may be used to ensure removal of the reaction by-products.

[0072] During atomic layer deposition, the substrate 210 may be maintained approximately below a thermal decomposition temperature of a selected tantalum containing compound. An exemplary heater temperature range to be used with tantalum containing compounds identified herein is approximately between about 20°C and about 500°C at a chamber pressure less than about 100 torr, preferably less than

50 torr. When the tantalum containing gas is PDMAT, the heater temperature is preferably between about 100°C and about 300°C, more preferably between about 175°C and 250°C, and the chamber pressure is between about 1.0 and about 5.0 torr. In other embodiments, it should be understood that other temperatures and pressures may be used. For example, a temperature above a thermal decomposition temperature may be used. However, the temperature should be selected so that more than 50 percent of the deposition activity is by absorption processes. In another example, a temperature above a thermal decomposition temperature may be used in which the amount of decomposition during each precursor deposition is limited so that the growth mode will be similar to an atomic layer deposition growth mode.

[0073] One exemplary process of depositing a tantalum nitride layer by atomic layer deposition, in the process chamber 200 of Figures 1-4, comprises providing pulses of pentadimethylamino-tantalum (PDMAT) from gas source 238 at a flow rate between about 100 sccm and about 1000 sccm, preferably between about 100 sccm and about 400 sccm, through valve 242A for a pulse time of about 0.5 seconds or less, about 0.1 seconds or less, or about 0.05 seconds or less due the smaller volume of the reaction zone 264. Pulses of ammonia may be provided from gas source 239 at a flow rate between about 100 sccm and about 1000 sccm, preferably between 200 sccm and about 600 sccm, through valve 242B for a pulse time of about 0.5 seconds or less, about 0.1 seconds or less, or about 0.05 seconds or less due to a smaller volume of the reaction zone 264. An argon purge gas at a flow rate between about 100 sccm and about 1000 sccm, preferably, between about 100 sccm and about 400 sccm, may be continuously provided from gas source 240 through valves 242A, 242B. The time between pulses of the tantalum containing compound and the nitrogen containing compound may be about 0.5 seconds or less, about 0.1 seconds or less, or about 0.07 seconds or less due to the smaller volume of the reaction zone 264. It is believed that a pulse time of about 0.016 seconds or more is required to fill the reaction zone 264 with a reactant gas and/or a purge gas. The heater temperature preferably is maintained between about 100°C and about 300°C at a chamber pressure between about 1.0 and about 5.0 torr. This process provides a tantalum nitride layer in a thickness between about 0.5 Å and about 1.0 Å per cycle. The alternating sequence may be repeated until a desired thickness is achieved.



[0074] In one embodiment, the layer, such as a tantalum nitride layer, is deposited to a sidewall coverage of about 50 Å or less. In another embodiment, the layer is deposited to a sidewall coverage of about 20 Å or less. In still another embodiment, the layer is deposited to a sidewall coverage of about 10 Å or less. A tantalum nitride layer with a thickness of about 10 Å or less is believed to be a sufficient thickness in the application as a barrier layer to prevent copper diffusion. In one aspect, a thin barrier layer may be used to advantage in filling sub-micron (e.g., less than 0.15 μm) and smaller features having high aspect ratios (e.g., greater than 5 to 1). Of course, a layer having a sidewall coverage of greater than 50 Å may be used.

[0075] Embodiments of atomic layer deposition have been described above as absorption of a monolayer of reactants on a substrate. The present invention also includes embodiments in which the reactants are deposited to more or less than a monolayer. The present invention also includes embodiments in which the reactants are not deposited in a self-limiting manner. The present invention also includes embodiments in which deposition occurs in mainly a chemical vapor deposition process in which the reactants are delivered sequentially or simultaneously.

[0076] Embodiments of atomic layer deposition have been described above as the deposition of the binary compound of tantalum nitride utilizing pulses of two reactants. In the deposition of other elements or compounds, pulses of two or more reactants may also be used.

[0077] While foregoing is directed to the preferred embodiment of the present invention, other and further embodiments of the invention may be devised without departing from the basic scope thereof, and the scope thereof is determined by the claims that follow.